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The Daily

Statistics Canada

Thursday, December 10, 1998
For release at 8:30 a.m.

MAJOR RELEASES

There are no major releases today.

OTHER RELEASES

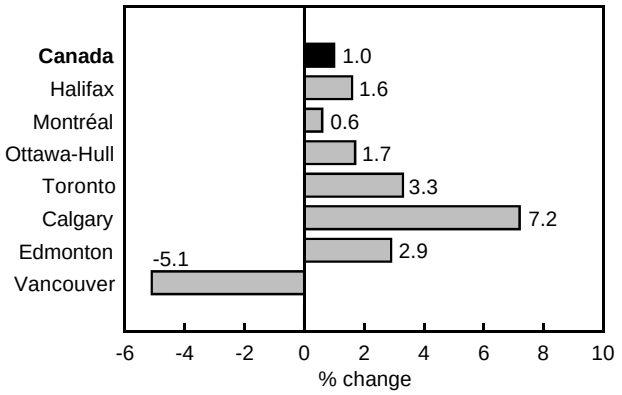
PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

OTHER RELEASES

New Housing Price Index
October 1998

The New Housing Price Index was 1.0% higher in October compared with the same period a year earlier. This index, which measures contractors selling prices for new houses, increased 0.1% between September and October 1998.

New housing price indexes
October 1997 to October 1998



The largest monthly increases were noted in Charlottetown (+1.0%) and London (+0.7%) as some builders passed on increases in construction costs to new home buyers. Smaller increases were also noted in several other Canadian cities. However, these increases were almost completely offset by a monthly decrease registered in Vancouver (-0.6%). There were no other decreases this month but 10 of the 21 cities surveyed showed no monthly change in October. Generally, contractors attributed these stable prices to competitive factors.

Annual changes varied considerably among the cities surveyed. The largest annual increase was observed in the active Calgary (+7.2%) market. The largest annual decreases were noted in Victoria (-6.5%) and Vancouver (-5.1%) where market conditions remain very competitive.

New housing price indexes
(1992=100)

	Oct. 1998	Oct. 1997 to Oct. 1998	Sept. to Oct. 1998
		% change	
Canada total	**100.2**	**1.0**	**0.1**
House only	100.8	1.8	0.2
Land only	101.7	0.2	-0.2
St. John's	96.0	-0.8	-
Halifax	108.4	1.6	0.2
Charlottetown	104.3	2.0	1.0
St. John-Moncton-Fredericton	93.1	-1.5	-
Quebec City	98.4	-0.1	-
Montréal	102.6	0.6	0.3
Ottawa-Hull	98.4	1.7	0.1
Toronto	102.7	3.3	0.2
Hamilton	102.7	2.5	-
St. Catharines-Niagara	100.2	1.6	0.5
Kitchener-Waterloo	100.4	1.5	-
London	98.4	0.9	0.7
Windsor	104.7	-0.6	-
Sudbury-Thunder Bay	100.2	-1.8	-
Winnipeg	112.3	0.6	-
Regina	125.5	4.3	-
Saskatoon	112.7	2.1	-
Calgary	125.0	7.2	0.1
Edmonton	108.2	2.9	0.1
Vancouver	86.1	-5.1	-0.6
Victoria	78.0	-6.5	0.1

- *Nil or zero.*

Available on CANSIM: matrix 9921.

The fourth quarter 1998 issue of *Construction price statistics* (62-007-XPB,$24/$79) will be available in March 1999. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Louise Chaîné (613-951-3350; fax: 613-951-2848; *infounit@statcan.ca*), Client Services Unit, Prices Division. ■

Federal government employment in census metropolitan areas
September 1998

In September 1998, about 222,500 employees — or close to 68% of the federal government workforce — were employeed in the 25 census metropolitan areas

of Canada. This was a decrease of 13,300 jobs in two years or down 5.6% compared with September 1996.

Most of the decline occured CMAs in Quebec and Ontario, where the federal workforce fell by 7,700 employees (-4.8%) from September 1996. The Ottawa/Hull CMA led the decline, losing more than 2,600 jobs in the last two years. This was in line with federal government restructuring initiated early in the 1990s. The Ottawa/Hull CMA was the region hardest hit by job reduction, losing more than 16,000 jobs since September 1992 when the federal government reported 107,000 employees working in the area. The CMAs of Toronto (-9,7% or 1,900) and Winnipeg (-15,2% or 1,700) registered the next largest decline in the federal workforce compared with September 1996.

A reduction of the federal government workforce does not necessarily mean that jobs were lost. In some instances, such as the Department of National Defence, a portion of the affected employees were redeployed in other regions of Canada. In some other cases, the federal government handed over the delivery of some of its responsibilities to private companies or provincial governments. Hence, 6,000 employees were transferred to the private sector when Transport Canada made the newly created Nav Canada responsible for civil air traffic control in 1997. Further, almost 1,100 jobs were transferred to the provincial government workforce in Quebec last April as a result of the implementation of the *Canada-Quebec Labour Market Agreement in Principle*, signed in April 1997.

Note: A census metropolitan area (CMA) is a very large urban area (known as the urban core) together with adjacent urban and rural areas (known as urban and rural fringes) that have a high degree of social and economic integration with the urban core. A CMA has an urban core population of at least 100,000, based on the previous census.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 2861.

The annual publication *Public sector employment and wages and salaries 1996* (72-209-XPB, $44) is now available. See *How to order publications*.

Data are also available through custom tabulation. For information or for general enquiries on the Public Institutions Division's products and services, contact Viola Jabbour, (613-951-0767; fax: 613-951-0661) Data Dissemination, Public Institutions Division. For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact Alain Paquet (613-951-8565), Public Institutions Division. ■

Are there high-tech industries or only high-tech firms?

1996

Statistics Canada today released a research study which investigates what it means to be high-tech. Its findings are relevant to the ongoing debate over the nature of the new knowledge economy. Evidence from this study suggests that firms that develop high-tech competencies are found in many different sectors, many of which do not conform to popular notions of high-tech.

More than 70% of successful new firms are high-tech. That is, they either innovate, use advanced technologies, employ skilled workers or emphasize training. These new, high-tech firms are found in many sectors of the economy, not only in what are often considered to be high-tech areas (such as biotechnology or information technology).

Some industries, such as computer services, printing and publishing and farm services, do have greater numbers of high-tech firms operating in them than do others. However, high-tech firms are active in virtually all industries.

A high-tech firm stresses innovation, advanced technology use or worker skills. A high-tech firm might stress all of these areas, or it might stress just one. Considering all these elements reveals that new, successful high-tech firms, often on the cutting edge of industrial change, operate in all sectors of the economy. This is an improvement over earlier research, this study argues, because it moves away from simplistic definitions of high-tech, often related to research and development expenditure.

Referring to some industries as high-tech implies that there are also low-tech industries. According to this study, this is misleading because it unfairly characterizes all firms in an industry as low-tech. Measuring the labour skills of firms in so-called low-tech industries reveals that there are well over half as many high-tech firms as there are in high-tech industries.

It is also true that not all firms in high-tech industries are high-tech. Many of the leading firms in low-tech industries are more advanced than many of the firms in high-tech industries. That is, they do more innovation, use more advanced technologies or have higher worker skills.

Note: The results of this study are based on data from Statistics Canada's 1996 Survey of Operating and Financing Practices. This survey focussed on

new, small firms in a number of goods and services industries. These firms are also successful in that they have survived to their early teen years. Data from this survey were used to develop basic measures of technological prowess that are relevant for such firms. These measures focussed on their innovation activity, their use of advanced technologies, and their investment in labour skills. Information on these characteristics of individual firms can be used to assess the 'high-tech' characteristics of industries.

The research study *"Are there high-tech industries or only high-tech firms? Evidence from new-technology based firms"* is now available. To obtain a copy, contact Louise Laurin (613-951-4676), Micro-economic Analysis Division. The paper is also available free on the Internet (*www.statcan.ca*).

For more information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods or data quality of this release, contact John Baldwin (613-951-8588) or Guy Gellatly (613-951-3758), Micro-Economic Analysis Division. ■

Steel primary forms

Week ending December 5, 1998 (preliminary)

Steel primary forms production for the week ending December 5, 1998, totalled 300 834 metric tonnes, up 2.9% from the week-earlier 292 333 tonnes and down 0.3% from the year-earlier 301 614 tonnes. The cumulative total at the end of the week was 14 757 622 tonnes, a 2.9% increase compared with 14 344 808 tonnes for the same period in 1997.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-7093; *milsomg@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Steel primary forms

October 1998

Steel primary forms production for October totalled 1 125 701 metric tonnes, down 14.1% from 1 310 542 tonnes produced the same period a year earlier.

Year-to-date production reached 13 367 741 tonnes, up 4.0% from 12 858 502 tonnes a year earlier.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 58 (level 2, series 3).

The October 1998 issue of *Primary iron and steel* (41-001-XPB, $7/$62) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Greg Milsom (613-951-7093; *milsomg@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

Railway carloadings

October 1998

Carload freight (excluding intermodal traffic) loaded by railways in Canada totalled 20.9 million tonnes in October, down 8.9% from October 1997. The carriers received an additional 1.9 million tonnes from United States connections during October.

Intermodal (piggyback) tonnage of 1.7 million tonnes represented a decrease of 1.0% compared with the same month last year. Year-to-date figures show a decrease of 1.8%.

Total traffic, consisting of carload freight and intermodal traffic, fell 8.3% during the reference month bringing the year-to-date total to 215.3 million tonnes, down 2.8% from the previous year. Receipts from United States connections increased 2.8% during the same period.

Cumulative data for 1997 and 1998 have been revised.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 1431.

The October 1998 issue of *Railway carloadings* (52-001-XPB, $11/$103) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; fax: 613-951-0009; *laroque@statcan.ca*), Transportation Division. ■

Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins

October 1998

Chemical firms produced 196 645 metric tonnes of polyethylene synthetic resins in October, an increase of 9.2% from 180 005 tonnes in October 1997.

Year-to-date production totalled 1 898 858 tonnes, up 5.3% from 1 803 146 tonnes a year earlier.

Data are also available on production of 3 other types of synthetic resins and 24 industrial chemicals.

Available on CANSIM: matrix 951.

The October 1998 issue of *Industrial chemicals and synthetic resins* (46-002-XPB, $7/62) will be available shortly. See *How to order publications*.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Randall Sheldrick (613-951-7199; *shelran@statcan.ca*), Manufacturing, Construction and Energy Division. ■

For-hire motor carriers of freight annual supplement

1997

Operating revenues for an estimated 2,350 for-hire motor carriers of freight, earning at least $1 million annually, totalled $14.3 billion in 1997. Operating expenses totalled $13.6 billion for an operating ratio of 0.95 (any ratio over 1.00 represents an operating loss). The net profit of for-hire carriers of freight in 1997 ($460 million) was a significant increase over the previous year. The operating profit margin of 4.9% in 1997 was the strongest result this decade.

Financial statistics on the for-hire motor carriers of freight industry are available from the annual supplement to the Quarterly Motor Carriers of Freight Survey. This supplement survey provides aggregate measurements and other financial ratios based on a sample of almost 800 carriers.

For further information, or to enquire about the concepts, methods and data quality of this release, contact Robert Larocque (613-951-2486; *laroque@statcan.ca*) or Gilles Paré (613-951-2517; fax: 613-951-0579; *paregil@statcan.ca*), Trucking Section, Transportation Division. ■

PUBLICATIONS RELEASED

Building permits, October 1998
Catalogue number 64-001-XIB
(Canada: $19/$186; outside Canada: US$19/US$186).

Exports by country, January-September 1998
Catalogue number 65-003-XMB
(Canada: $62/$206; outside Canada: US$62/US$206).

Exports by country, January-September 1998
Catalogue number 65-003-XPB
(Canada: $124/$412; outside Canada: US$124/US$412).

All prices exclude sales tax.

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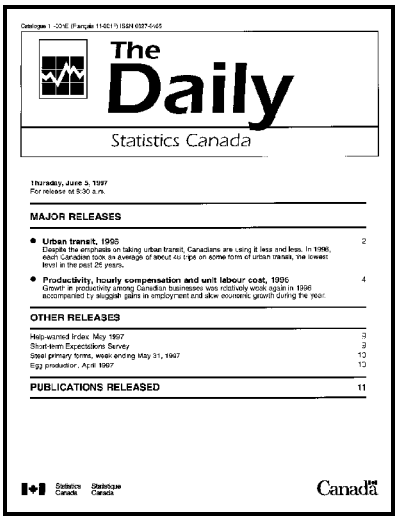
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MAJOR RELEASES

- Urban transit, 1995 2
  Despite the emphasis on taking urban transit, Canadians are using it less and less. In 1996, each Canadian took an average of about six trips on some form of urban transit, the lowest level in the past 25 years.
- Productivity, hourly compensation and unit labour cost, 1996 4
  Growth in productivity among Canadian businesses was relatively weak again in 1996 accompanied by sluggish gains in employment and slow economic growth during the year.

OTHER RELEASES

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Canada

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